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Standards of accommodation for air travel

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. The present report covers the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000, and is submitted in accordance with General Assembly decisions 44/442 of 21 December 1989 and 46/450 of 20 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit annual reports on standards of accommodation for air travel. As also requested by the Assembly in its decision 40/455 of 18 December 1985 and section XIII of its resolution 45/248 A of 21 December 1990, respectively, information is included on expenditures by the United Nations for first-class air travel and relevant exceptions.

2. During the period under review, standards of accommodation for air travel were governed by General Assembly resolution 42/214 of 21 December 1987, in which the Assembly had decided that all individuals, with the exception of the Secretary-General and the heads of delegations of the least developed countries to the regular and special sessions of the Assembly, whose travel was financed by United Nations organizations and programmes and who had been previously entitled to first-class accommodation, would be required to travel at the class immediately below first class. In the same resolution, the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to exercise his discretion in making exceptions to allow first-class travel on a case-by-case basis.

II. Delegation travel

3. The General Assembly, in its resolution 42/214, limits the payment of first-class accommodation by air to one representative of each Member State designated as a least developed country attending the regular and special sessions of the Assembly. For the fifty-fourth session, for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000, claims submitted to date involved 29 such journeys at a cost of $141,020.

III. Exceptions authorized by the Secretary-General

4. As stated above, in General Assembly resolution 42/214, the Secretary-General was authorized to exercise his discretion in making exceptions to allow first-class air travel on a case-by-case basis. In addition, business-class travel by air may be authorized by the Secretary-General in certain circumstances, in accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/249/Rev.3 of 29 March 1989.

* This report could not be submitted by the deadline owing to the need to receive information from various departments and offices pertaining to the travel year ended 30 June 2000.

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5. Generally, in reviewing cases that may warrant an exception, the Secretary-General takes into consideration the following circumstances:

(a) A medical condition may exist necessitating a level of comfort not available in the normal standard of accommodation to which the traveller is entitled. Such cases are referred to the Director of the Medical Services Division of the Secretariat for recommendation. It should be noted that the practice of granting exceptions in cases where a traveller is of an advanced age has been discontinued;

(b) The normal standard of accommodation is not available and, owing to the exigencies of the service, the traveller is required to travel on a particular date. Cases also arise where accommodation at the normal entitlement is not available and the cost of daily subsistence allowance, while waiting for the next available seat, would be greater than the higher standard of travel;

(c) The traveller is considered an eminent person, such as a former head of State, or a prominent figure in political, humanitarian or cultural areas;

(d) The traveller is a prominent person who is donating his or her services free of charge to the Organization, and, in some cases, at a loss of personal income. Such individuals may be accorded the standard of accommodation that they normally use when travelling;

(e) The traveller, after completing a full day of work, is required to travel through the night in order to resume work, attend meetings or present a paper at another location on the following morning or immediately upon arrival. Where such cases involve arduous journeys, it has been deemed reasonable that the standard of accommodation accorded to the traveller should provide the best rest possible while travelling, or provide the conditions most conducive to work while flying, or both.

6. In respect of exceptions to air travel authorized during the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 owing to the circumstances described in paragraph 5 above, the present report provides, in annexes I to V, detailed information on the additional cost of and reasons for such exceptions.

7. On 18 March 1998, the Secretary-General decided, as an exception, that all travel of the Deputy Secretary-General should be in first class, in keeping with her special status. As regards practical arrangements, efforts first are made to obtain upgrades to first class against payment of the full business-class fare. Where this is not feasible, the first-class fare is paid. During the reporting period, 10 such journeys were carried out at a total additional cost of $26,783. Details of such travel are provided in annex VI to this report.

8. To strengthen the ability of the President of the General Assembly to effectively and efficiently discharge the responsibilities of his Office, the Assembly, in resolution 53/214 of 18 December 1998, decided that the President, consistent with the approved programme budget, should have full authority to use the funds provided for the budget for the Office. Based on that authority, the President of the fifty-fourth session of the Assembly undertook travel in first class. During the reporting period, eight such journeys were carried out at a total additional cost of $30,561. Details of such travel are provided in annex VII to this report.

9. Altogether, for travel during the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000, the Secretary-General exercised his discretion by authorizing, as an exception, 46 cases of first-class air travel. In addition, during the same period, the Secretary-General authorized business-class travel by air as an exception to the standards of accommodation in 30 cases.

10. It should be noted that, in accordance with the established practice to ensure personal safety, the Secretary-General was accompanied on all trips during the period under review by a personal aide/security officer who travelled by air in first class. The total additional cost of 13 such trips was $55,662.

11. While continuous administrative oversight has kept the number of exceptions at a minimum, it should be noted that in certain cases they are unavoidable. For example, exceptions owing to the lack of availability of regular standards are dictated by the exigencies of specific situations, and their number cannot therefore be kept constant or be forced to decrease without hampering the efficiency of the traveller's missions. Moreover, in many cases, to compel a traveller to wait until the established standard of travel becomes available would result in extra costs for the Organization for the daily subsistence allowance over and above the cost of an upgrade; an upgrade therefore remains the only cost-effective option.

12. In the context of monitoring adherence to the standards of accommodation for air travel, cases were identified in which air travel was undertaken at a standard of accommodation higher than normal entitlement, for which no exception had been sought. In such cases, subsequent *ex post facto* approval was sought for an exception to the standards of accommodation. The details of such *ex post facto* exceptions authorized by the Secretary-General for the previous reporting period are outlined in annex VIII to this report.

Table 1
Summary of exceptions, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000
(Cost in United States dollars)

	First class		*Business class*		*Total*	
Reasons for exceptions	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*
Medical condition	5	6 119	2	1 973	7	8 092
Regular standard of accommodation not available	6	1 762	6	1 284	12	3 046
Eminent persons	2	4 628	8	10 503	10	15 131
Donating services free of charge to the Organization	2	2 824	8	8 914	10	11 738
Arduous journeys	0	0	6	2 216	6	2 216
Personal aides/security officer	13	55 662	0	0	13	55 662
Deputy Secretary-General	10	26 783	0	0	10	26 783
President of the General Assembly	8	30 561	0	0	8	30 561
Total	**46**	**128 339**	**30**	**24 890**	**76**	**153 229**

Table 2
Summary of exceptions, 1 July 1998-30 June 1999*
(Cost in United States dollars)

	First class		*Business class*		*Total*	
Reasons for exceptions	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*
Medical condition	14	11 139	2	1 629	16	12 768
Regular standard of accommodation not available	7	1 043	9	1 156	16	2 199
Eminent persons	10	12 806	11	13 648	21	26 454
Donating services free of charge to the Organization	1	2 893	3	5 279	4	8 172
Arduous journeys	3	7 893	1	159	4	8 052
Personal aides/security officer	15	32 456	0	0	15	32 456
Deputy Secretary-General	6	12 075	0	0	6	12 075
Total	**56**	**80 305**	**26**	**21 871**	**82**	**102 176**

* Adjusted for *ex post facto* authorizations that related to the previous reporting period but were not included in the previous report (A/54/382).

Annex I

Exceptions authorized owing to medical conditions, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
A. First class		
1. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for East Timor	Tampa/New York/Tampa	502
2. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for East Timor	Tampa/Jakarta/Dili/Jakarta/ New York/Tampa	1 963
3. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for East Timor	Tampa/New York/Tampa	431
4. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for East Timor	Tampa/New York/Tampa	244
5. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for East Timor	Tampa/New York/Singapore/ Jakarta/Dili/New York/Tampa	2 979
Subtotal		**6 119**
B. Business class		
1. Executive Director, African Renaissance Institute	Nairobi/London/Nairobi	1 086
2. Staff member, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Geneva/New York/Geneva	887
Subtotal		**1 973**
Total		**8 092**

Annex II

Exceptions authorized when the regular standard of accommodation was not available, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
A. First class		
1. Staff member, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	.../Casablanca/Algiers/...	52
2. Representative of the Secretary-General in the Central African Republic	Bujumbura/Bangui/Bujumbura	587
3. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	New York/Cincinnati/New York	190
4. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	.../Paris/Sanaa/...	573
5. Staff member, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	.../Sanaa/Zagreb/...	306
6. Staff member, UNDP	.../Casablanca/Algiers/...	54
Subtotal		**1 762**
B. Business class		
1. Staff member, Department of Public Information	Bangui/Douala/Libreville	519
2. Representative of the Transitional Administrator, United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor	Phnom Penh/Jakarta/Phnom Penh	231
3. Staff member, UNDP	New York/San Salvador/...	25
4. Staff member, UNDP	.../Dar es Salaam/New York	187
5. Staff member, UNDP	.../Dakar/Paris/New York	180
6. Consultant, UNDP	.../Kupang/Denpasar/Jakarta/...	142
Subtotal		**1 284**
Total		**3 046**

[a] The points of ellipsis (...) in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by the regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

Annex III

Exceptions authorized for eminent persons, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
A. First class		
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Sasakawa Environment Prize award ceremony		
1. Princess of Thailand	Bangkok/New York/Bangkok	2 094
Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) II High-level Seminar on Africa's External Debt		
2. Archbishop of South Africa	Atlanta/Nairobi/Atlanta	2 534
Subtotal		**4 628**
B. Business class		
Ad hoc expert group meeting held in connection with the twenty-eighth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)		
1. Former President of Guatemala	Guatemala/Mexico City/Guatemala	22
2. Former President of Chile	Santiago/Mexico City/Santiago	568
3. Former President of Ecuador	Quito/Mexico City/Quito	48
4. Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations	New York/Mexico City/New York	712
International Conference on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People		
5. Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations	New York/Paris/New York	3 740
High-level panel of the Economic and Social Council on the eradication of poverty		
6. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Saint Lucia	Saint Lucia/New York/Saint Lucia	300
Award ceremony of the UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize		
7. Chairman, UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize Selection Committee	London/New York/London	3 723

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
The United Nations in the twenty-first century: a vision from Latin America and the Caribbean		
8. Former President of Mexico	Mexico City/Santiago/ Mexico City	1 390
Subtotal		**10 503**
Total		**15 131**

[a] The points of ellipsis (...) in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by the regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

Annex IV

Exceptions authorized for prominent persons donating their services free of charge to the Organization, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
A. First class		
To assist in the initial start-up phase of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC)		
1. Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden	Stockholm/New York/Stockholm	300
To promote awareness of education programmes of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to fight the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic and its effect on Africa		
2. UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador	New York/Amsterdam/Nairobi/.../ Dar es Salaam/London/ New York	2 524
Subtotal		**2 824**
B. Business class		
High-level Group of Experts on Information Technology		
1. Member of European Parliament	Stockholm/New York/ Stockholm	825
2. Former Head of State, Costa Rica	San Jose/New York/San Jose	1 130
Security Council debate on Rwanda		
3. Former Prime Minster of Sweden and Chairman of the Rwanda Inquiry	Stockholm/New York/ Stockholm	1 153
High-level segment of the Economic and Social Council		
4. Keynote speaker and Professor, University of California at Berkeley	San Francisco/New York/ San Francisco	1 208
Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Review Team		
5. Former President, Ford Foundation	New York/Geneva/New York	2 372
6. Former Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	Stockholm/Vienna/Stockholm	350
7. Former Under-Secretary-General	New York/London/Paris/Geneva/ New York	964

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
8. Former Under-Secretary-General	New York/Montreal/New York	912
Subtotal		**8 914**
Total		**11 738**

[a] The points of ellipsis (...) in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by the regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

Annex V

Exceptions authorized for cases involving arduous journeys, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
A. First class		
None		-
Subtotal		-
B. Business class		
1. Staff member, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Geneva/Moscow/Geneva	497
2. Staff member, UNDP	New York/Brussels/New York	954
3. Staff member, UNDP	New York/London/...	171
4. Staff member, UNOPS	.../Abidjan/Johannesburg/...	226
5. Staff member, UNOPS	.../Abidjan/Johannesburg/...	124
6. Staff member, United Nations Capital Development Fund	New York/Copenhagen/New York	244
Subtotal		**2 216**
Total		**2 216**

[a] The points of ellipsis (...) in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by the regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

Annex VI

Exceptions relating to the travel of the Deputy Secretary-General, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
First class		
1. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Geneva/New York	2 338
2. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Vienna/Seoul/ New York	1 769
3. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Dar es Salaam/ New York	2 455
4. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Geneva/New York	2 338
5. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Tokyo/New York	4 780
6. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Zurich/Brussels/.../ Amsterdam/New York	1 030
7. Deputy-Secretary-General	New York/London/New York	3 714
8. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Rome/Vienna/ New York	1 817
9. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Geneva/Brussels/ New York	3 815
10. Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Paris/New York/ Quebec/New York	2 727
Total		**26 783**

[a] The points of ellipsis (...) in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by the regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

Annex VII

Exceptions relating to the travel of the President of the General Assembly, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
First class		
1. President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Geneva/Monaco/Lomé/ Paris/New York	3 243
2. President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Hong Kong/Macao, China/Beijing/New York	4 725
3. President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Berlin/Kuwait City/Cairo/New York	2 211
4. President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Montego Bay/ Havana/Montego Bay/ Atlanta/New York	751
5. President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Singapore/Tokyo/ Windhoek/New York	11 856
6. President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Windhoek/New York	2 717
7. President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Wittenberg/New York	1 459
8. President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Dar es Salaam/ New York	3 599
Total		**30 561**

Annex VIII

Exceptions relating to the previous reporting period, 1 July 1998-30 June 1999

Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*	*Additional cost (United States dollars)*
Exceptions authorized when the regular standard of accommodation was not available		
A. First class		
1. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Africa	Addis Ababa/Asmara	188
Subtotal		**188**
B. Business class		
1. Staff member, Department of Political Affairs	Addis Ababa/Jeddah	49
Subtotal		**49**
Total		**237**